

Schiller Building (later
Garrick Theater)
64 West Randolph Street
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1058

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
60-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

SCHILLER BUILDING
(Later Garrick Theater)HABS
ILL,
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60-

Location: 64 West Randolph Street; Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner, Occupant and Use: The building was demolished in 1961 to make way for a six-story parking ramp.

Statement of Significance: Designed by Adler and Sullivan in 1891-92, the Schiller Building was a unique solution to the problem of placing a large theater and office building on a mid-block site. The result was the first "skyscraper" designed on a set-back principle. The plan was roughly I-shaped: a central 17-story tower with flanking nine-story wings formed the Randolph Street elevation, while behind it, a narrower 14-story wing extended back to the alley. The theater was placed in the central, windowless portion of the structure, while the offices above and on the street side enjoyed ample natural light. The soaring central tower represents the highest skyscraper created by the firm. In addition, the theater is said to have been one of the finest in Chicago, offering a completely unobstructed view of the stage and excellent acoustics. In February, 1960, the Garrick, as it was known locally, was named a Chicago Architectural Landmark. In spite of this recognition, in May, 1960, the building's owners began to make plans for its demolition and eventual replacement by a parking facility. There followed a lengthy court struggle between the Balaban and Katz Corporation and the City of Chicago; however, public opinion and civic pride were unable to prevent the final razing which occurred in 1961.

Through the efforts of many individuals and organizations, the Schiller Building was thoroughly photographed and a salvage project was undertaken to preserve most of the florid Sullivan ornamentation which embellished the interior and exterior surfaces. The ornament was later distributed to interested museums, colleges, and universities throughout the country.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lot 7 in Block 35 of the Original Town of Chicago in the southeast one-quarter Section 9-39-14. Platted by Canal Commissioners, August 4, 1830. Recorded May 29, 1837.

The following is based on the complete chain of title contained in Book 454B, pp. 222-225, 395, in the Cook County Recorder's Office:

The site originally was occupied by a one-story brick building owned by Frederick A. Winchelman (Document 67681, January 15, 1876). On January 20, 1892, the German Opera House & Co. is first mentioned in an agreement with Frank Amberg and wife (Document 1601136). The company apparently maintained a leasehold on the property until the sale by the Master of the German Opera House Co. to Allen B. Forbes (Documents 2837668 and 3016059, June 24, 1899 and October 3, 1900). Forbes later transferred the title to The Schiller Co. (Document 3149551, September 14, 1901). The ownership of the building continued under the name of the Garrick Building Corporation (Document 6722406, February 13, 1920) and the 64 W. Randolph Corporation (Document 13468762, March 20, 1945). The building was leased by Northern Trust Co. to Balaban & Katz Corporation on March 20, 1945. The ownership passed to the Marbro Corporation et al. from Phillis Sears and Franklin Dexter et al. (Document 17371024 and 17865742, November 7, 1958 and May 26, 1960). The Marbro Corporation granted a lease to the Garrick Garage Corporation on July 1, 1960 (Document 17897105). The final entry in the record, dated April 10, 1963 names the Garrick Garage Corporation as owners of the property (Document 18766022).

2. Date of erection: 1891-92.
3. Architect: Adler and Sullivan, William Sooy Smith served as consultant and proposed the foundation system.
4. Original plan and construction: There is no record of the original building permit in the books of the Department of Buildings, Chicago. The following narrative accounts describe the Schiller Building in the 1890's and early 20th century; a chart from the office of Adler & Sullivan indicates building costs:

- a. Industrial Chicago (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891), v. I, pp. 223-224.

"The German theater, 103 to 109 Randolph street, was designed by Adler and Sullivan early in 1891. The building covers an area of 80x181 feet, is fourteen stories high, and cost \$600,000. The material for the exterior is a warm, light brown terra cotta. All of the ground floor, excepting two small stores, are occupied by a theater, which extends through six stories. Here it is covered with heavy steel trusses twenty-five feet in high [sic], between and above which will be eight stories of rooms and halls. The theater itself contains one thousand three hundred seats. It, as well as the stage, is entirely fireproof in construction. There is in the building, above the stage, several rooms for a German down-town club of large membership, as also a restaurant, lecture room and ballroom. In addition to these purposes the building will be used as a first-class hotel, conducted on the European plan, containing about one hundred and fifty guest rooms, of which fifty have private bathrooms. One of the peculiarities of the theater is that there is not within it a single pillar to obstruct the view of any one, either on the main floor or in the balcony or gallery. The entrance to the main floor of the theater is somewhat after the manner of the entrance to the Auditorium, that is, on two levels. The same method of reaching the gallery and balcony is pursued. By this means there are created for the use of those attending the theater, four foyers at the end of the theater, these being supplemented by corridors are so arranged as to pass the stage and communicate directly with the alley in the rear of the building.

"The finish of the entire building is in hardwood, halls and corridor floors throughout are of mosaic; walls of tile and marble; the structure in every way first-class. The foundation is on piles, above which are the ordinary modern foundation of concrete and steel beams. The framework of the entire structure is of steel pillars and steel beams, riveted together at all junctions. A peculiarity of the plan of the building is the lowering of the front in conjunction with the light courts of the same. The purpose of this is to admit a profusion of south light into the courts, and thereby make every room in it an outside room. Four thousand incandescent lamps furnish the light, and every room is heated by a double radiation ventilation furnished by seven fans driven by electric motors. Five

hydraulic elevators are used in conjunction with broad stairways for the necessary communication between the different stories. The principal contracts for the German opera house were awarded June 10, 1891, as follows: Probst Construction Company, mason work and fireproofing, for \$95,000; Binder and Seifert, iron works, for \$122,900; Northwestern Terra Cotta Works, terra cotta, for \$74,188."

- b. "Schiller Theater, Chicago; The Highest and Finest Theater Building in the World, Grand English Opening and Dedication Program, October 17, 1892."

"Description of the Interior"

"The entrance from the street is through a marble-paved lobby, wide, convenient and comfortable. At the right, in a marble nook, is the box office. Entering through the main doorway is the lower lobby, off which are three coat, cloak and toilet rooms. On either side marble stairways lead to the main floor of the auditorium. Back of the seating is a comfortable and handsome foyer and from corridors, leading from the foyer to the boxes, on either side of the auditorium.

"There are six lower (no upper) boxes, three on each side, large commodious, and arranged for throwing two or three into one, for the convenience of theater parties. There are 1270 seats in the house, all so placed that every seat commands a clear and unobstructed view of the stage. A remarkable feature is the absence of pillars from the interior, while the sight lines and acoustic properties are not excelled in the world.

"The proscenium opening is semi-circular, and from this extends outward a series of semi-circular arches, that gradually enlarge and widen until they reach the side walls. Beneath these arches on either side rising from the parquette floor are the boxes. Above the boxes are sculptural decorations, original in conception, tasteful and exquisite in workmanship and execution. The one of the left represents Homer, 'The father of poetry,' surrounded by listeners-a bride and her love, a mother and her babe, a warrior and a tiller of the soil-all apparently absorbed in the utterances of the poet. In one upper corner is an allegorical representation of Art, and in the other a representation of Music. Over the right hand boxes is a representation of Schiller mounted upon Pegasus, led by Genius and followed by representatives of terpsichore, drama and the muses. The figures in the corner representing Strength and Beauty respectively. The boxes and bas reliefs are

inclosed by a heavy gold border, and the effect is of framed pictures. On the side walls, over the balcony, are two handsome paintings. The one on the left represents Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth in the garden with Lester and Shrewsbury. The one on the right shows a street in Nuremberg, with Faust and Margurite meeting outside the church, and Mephistopheles and Marta watching amid the populace in the background. The color scheme used in the background is a combination of water green and coral pink, with gold judiciously employed, all so harmoniously blended as to produce a most graceful effect.

"The lighting is so arranged that it is both brilliant and soft, and the lamps so placed that all glare of light in the eyes of the audience is avoided. There are two curtains, the outer one being of woven asbestos, and decorated with admirable taste in the prevailing tints of the decorations of the house. The Drop Curtain, acknowledged to be the finest in the city, is very effective, while the colors harmonize with the interior decorations. 'Genius Crowning Intellect' is the theme of the picture contained in a medallion occupying the center of the curtain. Genius is represented by a female figure tending to Schiller a laurel wreath. Shakespeare is placed on the other side of Genius, while at her feet sits History recording the events in her tablets. All the interlacing embroidery surrounding the panel is a reproduction of the architectural and plastic details that constitute the facade of the row of boxes. The side folds of the satin are of sea green and the plushed border overhead is of the same tint, while the drapery in the center panel shows flesh colors.

"The stage, 40 x 80 feet in size, is complete and perfect in every detail of its appointments. The dressing-rooms are convenient and commodious. The scenery is from the brushes of the best artists."

"Together with all the convenience, comfort, beauty and elegance provided in this, the most effective and handsomest theater in Chicago, it is, as is also the entire building, absolutely fire-proof, and none need fear danger from fire within its walls."

- c. Unrivalled Chicago and How to See It (Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally & Co., Publishers, 1896), p. 86:

"The Schiller Theater is situated on Randolph Street, between Clark and Dearborn, and is one of the finest

and most popular of Chicago places of amusement. It has recently passed into the hands of Mr. Robert Blei, who, in a short time, has established a reputation of giving the best Vaudeville Entertainment furnished in the country. The prices range from 20 cents to \$1, and all seats are reserved. One beauty about the Schiller auditorium is that there are no posts or columns in any part of the house to interfere with the view of the stage. The seating capacity is about twelve hundred, and there are six boxes. The chairs are large and comfortable, with plenty of space between each row. Improved ventilating systems, including a perfect heating system for winter and refrigerating system for summer, together with suction fans in the roof that secure a continuous supply of fresh air, which renders it pleasant at any season of the year. The Schiller forms one of a circuit of vaudeville houses which extend from New York to San Francisco, and secures the first option on all the new attractions which come from Europe."

- d. Paul Gilbert and Charles Lee Bryson, Chicago and Its Makers (Chicago: Felix Mendelsohn, Publisher, 1929), p. 149:

"The Schiller Theater was built by the German Opera House Co., and opened on October 17, 1892, by Chas. Frohman's Company in 'Gloriana'. Successively managed by Thomas W. Prior, Ira J. LaMotte, David Henderson, George A. Fair, Gustav Luders and others. Its name was changed to the Dearborn on September 4, 1891, and later to the Garrick, under which name it still flourishes."

- e. Chart showing costs of buildings, 1879-1895, by Adler and Sullivan. Original manuscript in the Burnham Library of the Art Institute of Chicago:

Cubic Contents:	2, 433, 440
1. Foundations	. 0129
2. Masonry	. 0121
3. Carpentry	. 0261
4. Struct. Iron	. 0577
5. Ornam. Iron	. 0032
8. Terra Cotta	. 0304
10. Fire Proofing	. 0277
11. Concrete or Asph.	. 0031
13. Plastering	. 0072
14. Orn. Plaster	. 0015
15. Sheet Metal	. 0022
16. Roofing	. 0007

17.	P'l'l'g' Gas and Sewers	. 0179
18.	Boilers and tanks	.
19.	Heating Appar.	.
20.	Vent'g.	. 0256
21.	Pipe Covering	. 0014
22.	Temp. Reg'l'r.	. 0020
23.	Elevators	. 0136
26.	Dynamos	.
27.	El. Wiring	. 0085
28.	Elec. L'gnt. Fix.	. 0027
31.	Painting	. 0048
32.	Plain Glass	.
33.	Stained Glass	. 0030
34.	Decoration	. 0054
35.	Marble & Tile	. 0147
39.	Hardware	. 0028
40.	Vault Doors	. 0005
41.	Iron Doors and Shut's	. 0002
42.	Mail Chutes	. 0007
44.	Stage and	. 0049
45.	Stage Mach'g.	.
46.	Scenery	. 0024
47.	Opera Chairs	. 0023
48.	Upol. & Carpets	. 0012

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Total Cost: \$737,099.42

For a complete description of the structure, both interior and exterior see Hugh Morrison, Louis Sullivan Prophet of Modern Architecture (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935), pp. 156-162. A more recent account of the building may be found in Carl W. Condit, The Chicago School of Architecture (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 128-133./

5. Alterations and additions: Before demolition, the first floor had been largely defaced through the tasteless addition of several signs and store fronts. The projecting cornice on the tower was removed in 1948 and awkwardly replaced by a brick parapet /Condit, op cit., p. 130/. Condit also includes a history of the events surrounding efforts to preserve or raze the building in 1960-61.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The building was originally intended to be a theater for German opera and drama, and is therefore bound up with the history of German settlement and organizations in Chicago. At the turn-of-the-century the Schiller was largely a home

for legitimate theater in Chicago, a role which it held until 1928. Since then, it was used as a movie theater and television studio.

In 1896, the office of Frank Lloyd Wright was located in the building. It has been suggested also that Wright may well have been directly involved with the design of the building while in Adler and Sullivan's employ /Willard Connely, Louis Sullivan As He Lived (New York: Horizon Press, Inc., 1960), pp. 148-201/.

C. Bibliography:

Chicago Heritage Committee Newsletter, No. 1 (August 1960).

Special issue on the Garrick Theater. Filed under:
"Chicago heritage committee," in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago.

Chicago, Ill., Schiller building, Adler and Sullivan, architects, 1892.

Microfilm of original roll 4, frames 1-99 located in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago.

"Chicago, Ill. Schiller building."

Clippings filed in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago. Newspaper articles concerning the demolition of the building.

Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. pp. 107, 128-133, 135-137, 140, 170, 179, Figs. 5, 65, 87-90.

Connely, Willard. Louis Sullivan As He Lived. New York: Horizon Press, Inc., 1960. pp. 147-148, 201, Pls. 26, 27.

Dubin, Eugene A., "Timber Piles Reused in Place, 70-year-old Piles under Old Garrick Theater Support 6-story Garage," Civil Engineering Magazine, Vol. XXXIII, No. 6 (June 1963), pp. 39-41.

An account of the use of the parking lot garage now on the site; includes reference to Adler and Sullivan's comments on the use of the piles.

Gilbert, Paul and Bryson, Charles Lee. Chicago and Its Makers. Chicago: Felix Mendelsohn, Publisher, 1929. pp. 149, 385 (photo: circa 1910).

Industrial Chicago. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1891. v. I, pp. 223-224; v. II, f. p. 218 line cut labeled: "The German Theater Building, Commercial Architecture, Romanesque Dress."

Miscellaneous pamphlets, statements, etc. on attempts to save the Garrick Theater Building from destruction, 1960 in the Library of the Chicago Historical Society. Includes Newsletter of the Chicago Heritage Committee and three typed pages; "In the Superior Court of Cook County, Opinion of the Court."

Morrison, Hugh. Louis Sullivan Prophet of Modern Architecture. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935. pp. 156-162, 302, Fig. 11, Pl. 50.

"New German Opera House, Chicago; Adler and Sullivan, architects," Architectural Record 1:277 (January - March, 1892). Engraving of exterior.

"New German Opera House, Chicago, Illinois; Adler and Sullivan, architects," Inland Architect v. XVII; pl. fol. p. 64 (June 1891).

Nickel, Richard. Two loose-leaf notebooks of photographs of the Garrick. Contains a complete record and catalogue of the ornament contained in the building, as well as a photographic record of the demolition. Mr. Nickel was largely responsible for efforts to preserve the building and the later salvage project. For information contact the Municipal Reference Library, Chicago.

Programs, unbound and arranged by years. Dated: 1903-33. Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Randall, Frank A. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949. pp. 19, 126. Bibliography.

"Schiller Building, Adler and Sullivan, architects," Inland Architect v. XXI (February, 1893). p. 16, pl. opp. p. 18 ("Tower and Upper Stories of the Schiller Building, Chicago": photo).

"Schiller (Garrick Theater) building, Chicago, Louis H. Sullivan, architect," Western Architect vol. XXIX (April 1920). pl. 4. Old view at the time theater was named "The Dearborn."

"The Schiller theater and Borden Block, Chicago, Illinois," American Architect vol. LV (January 9, 1897). pl. fol. p. 16.

"Schiller Theater, Chicago; The Highest and Finest Theater Building in the World; Grand English Opening and Dedication Program, October 17, 1892."

Library of the Chicago Historical Society. Line cut of exterior on cover as well as old interior views of the proscenium arch and curtain, murals in balcony and lobby, the promenade foyer, and a portion of the boxes.

Szarkowski, John. The Idea of Louis Sullivan. Minneapolis: The University of Minneapolis Press, 1956. pp. 23, 77-83. Photographs.

Unrivaled Chicago and How to See It. Chicago and New York: Rand McNally & Co., Publisher, 1896. pp. 86, 87 (photo).

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
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Historian
National Park Service
September 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Schiller Building, by the Chicago architectural firm of Adler and Sullivan was important in the late nineteenth century development of skeleton framing construction in Chicago. The extensive detail in terra cotta was a significant example of Sullivan's ornamental design.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is now demolished, and this description is written with the aid of the extensive photographic file provided to the Survey by Mr. Richard Nickel, Chicago.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: I-shaped, 80'-4" x 181'-6"; center tower on south elevation was 17 stories high. Side wings on south elevation were nine stories high. Office area over theater was three bays wide, with one projected bay each side in the nine story wings.
2. Foundations: Concrete footing on wood piles.
3. Wall construction: Terra cotta ornament and brick.

4. Structural system, framing: Steel skeleton frame with some use of Phoenix columns in stage loft.
 5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Large second story balcony, heavily ornamented in terra cotta with eleven arched openings.
 6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Two entrances to tower section on south facade either side of large main entrance to Theater. Additional store entrances on south facade and service entrances to the rear.
 - b. Windows: Display windows on first floor; both double-hung and pivoted windows in remainder of building.
 7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Terra-cotta cornice at top of tower, top of ten story side wings, and top of fourteenth floor office area over Theater. (Tower and side wing terra-cotta ornament had been removed a number of years prior to demolition).
 - c. Dormer, cupolas, towers: An ornamental octagonal tower originally existed on the roof of the seventeenth floor tower. Also, additional pent house and mechanical equipment rooms existed on top of the fourteenth floor office section.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plans:
 - a. Basement: Mechanical equipment and storage.
 - b. First floor: Theater, shops and stage which went through the seventh floor.
 - c. Second floor through the seventeenth floor: Rental offices.
 - d. Club rooms existed on the thirteenth floor.
 2. Stairways: One stairway in tower goes through entire seventeen floors. Minor stairs in Theater to balconies. Stair in rear of building over stage seventh through the thirteenth floor.

3. Flooring: Marble in circulation spaces. Two and one-quarter inch (2-1/4") strip flooring with various coverings of linoleum, carpet, tile, etc. in offices.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted.
 5. Lighting: Electrical.
 6. Heating: Central.
- D. Site and Surroundings:

The building was located on the north side of Randolph Street between Dearborn and Clark Streets in Chicago's "loop."

Prepared by J. William Rudd
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